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RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAKA 001007

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/INSB AND S/CT

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [KTFN](#) [KISL](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH BANS HIZB UT-TAHRIR OVER  
SECURITY CONCERNS

REF: A. DHAKA 997

[1](#)B. DHAKA 361

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Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

#### Summary

[1](#)1. (C) On October 22, the Government of Bangladesh banned the Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh (HTB) after determining the organization's activities were a threat to public safety. GOB officials stated their intent to use Bangladesh's new Prevention of Terrorism Act 2009, drafted with Mission Dhaka and U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) assistance, to prosecute members of the organization and possibly investigate HTB finances. The GOB initially froze bank assets, but expanded the asset freezing to non-bank HTB assets and establishments. Following the GOB ban, HTB propaganda warned against "American imperialism," called for people to oppose the proposed Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), and vowed that HTB would continue operating. End Summary.

#### GOB Bans Hizb ut-Tahrir

[1](#)2. (SBU) Home Minister Sahara Khatun announced on October 22 the GOB's decision to ban the Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir Bangladesh. The decision was announced a day after the bomb attack on ruling party Member of Parliament Barrister Fazle Noor Taposh (ref A). The announcement claimed that HTB had conducted "anti-state, anti-government, anti-people, and anti-democratic activities" in Bangladesh. In an October 24 press release, the Home Ministry announced the GOB would freeze the organization's bank assets. Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad said that it would be "easier to take legal action" against HTB now that it was banned. He noted that Section 18 of Bangladesh's Prevention of Terrorism Act 2009 makes membership of a banned organization an offense punishable with a six-month imprisonment and fine.

#### Assets Frozen

[1](#)3. (C) Bangladesh Bank contacts told the Resident Legal

Advisor (RLA) they found out about the asset freezing through the press release rather than official channels. Bank officials acted immediately and froze all HTB bank assets. Sources informed the RLA that Sonali Bank's Dhaka University Branch maintains the organization's accounts. (Note: Mahiuddin Ahmed, HTB's chief coordinator and official spokesperson, was suspended from his teaching position at Dhaka University. University officials have warned that Ahmed faced possible termination. End note.) A senior bank official interrupted the meeting to say the GOB had authorized freezing of non-bank assets and establishments. He emphasized that Bangladesh Bank was in direct contact with the Home Ministry, which was the lead government agency involved. Bank sources said that under the new Prevention of Terrorism Act, drafted with Mission Dhaka and DOJ assistance, the assets could be frozen for up to 60 days. After 60 days, the Bank would need a court order to continue to freeze the assets. The Home Ministry needs to submit a formal referral before the Bank can initiate a formal investigation into the frozen assets.

#### HTB Anti-U.S. Rhetoric

14. (SBU) HTB's objective is to establish an Islamic caliphate and the group has consistently opposed USG foreign policies. HTB led protests in November 2007 against U.S. efforts to provide relief to those affected by Cyclone Sidr. HTB reiterated its call for Bangladeshis to oppose "American imperialism" in a statement released to the media subsequent to the GOB ban. HTB claimed that it would continue to operate and asserted that HTB was banned in the United States "because it (U.S.) has understood that Hizb ut-Tahrir has the ability to analyze it (U.S.) and has the power to convince the people in Bangladesh." HTB also claimed the United

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States Government viewed HTB as an obstacle as the U.S. sought "total influence in Bangladesh." (Note: Hizb ut-Tahrir is not/not listed on the terrorist exclusion list. End note.) HTB also called for Bangladeshis to voice their opposition to a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with the United States.

#### Comment

15. (C) The GOB ban is good news for Bangladesh and the U.S., documenting a concrete action step by the GOB against an identified security threat that has a long anti-U.S. pedigree. Post will continue to engage GOB interlocutors on media speculation that additional organizations might also be banned. Washington agencies may wish to evaluate whether further action, either unilateral or multilateral, against HTB would be appropriate.  
MORIARTY